Dark Skies Festival Event Testimonials

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

Below you can find testimonials from businesses that have taken part in the Dark Skies Festival over the years, as well as businesses new to the Festival. They share their experiences and why they benefit from taking part.

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Yore Mill Craft Shop and Gallery

“The 2022 Yorkshire Dales National Parks Dark Skies Festival was a massive success. Its appeal was its massive breadth of events and experiences across the Dales organised by a wide range of businesses. The events appealed to all ages and enabled the dark skies to be experienced with a pie or a pizza, or if you wished on a bike or in a canoe.

Yore Mill Craft Shop and Gallery is a Dark Sky Friendly Business. We promote our dark skies throughout the year with a range of events, as well as offering guests at our holiday accommodation “Starfall” stargazing experiences by Aysgarth Falls. We provide a telescope and binoculars for guests to explore the heavens.

In the 2022 Dark Sky Festival we were involved in the Stargazing events held at Aysgarth Falls. It was a sell-out, and visitors were able to enjoy a fantastic presentation as well being able to make use of a range of telescopes. We look forward to being involved in the Dark Skies Fringe Festival this Autumn. We also will be running a number of stargazing events from Autumn through to next Spring.

We will also be offering local businesses an opportunity to use our equipment and expertise to enhance their astro-events as well as offering them the opportunity to run other stargazing evenings at their locations. Our ‘Stargazing events’ will shortly be enhanced by the acquisition of an astro-camera/telescope which will enable participants to take home a selection of photographs of the moon, nebulae and even distant galaxies on their devices as well as providing them with the exciting and memorable experience of looking at them through an astronomical telescope.

Things in the world may look a little uncertain at the moment, and are seemingly ever-changing, however the one constant is that mindful experience of looking up at our dark skies here in the Dales, and never ceasing to be amazed.”

Stage 1 Cycles

“We have watched the Dark Skies Festival develop over the last 5-6 years to now the established event in the calendar.

It’s extremely positive for the business as it allows us to showcase our activities to a wide range of visitors. It starts the season early helping to encourage visitors to explore the Dales outside the traditional holiday peak seasons. It is more relevant to our particular business than the Cheese Festival for example as it is particularly supportive/relevant to outdoor activities.

This Dark Skies Festival was particularly busy despite poor weather and all our activities were oversubscribed and mainly by new visitors opposed to the local community.

It is an example of the National Park working at its best, engaging with businesses to positively promote active, sustainable holidays, encouraging visitors to consider longer stays in the Dales. Frequently we receive feedback that visitors struggle to find something to do in the Dales. There is loads to do but we are not always great and promoting it successfully or making it accessible and the Dark Skies Festival does this particularly well.”

Wensleydale Ice Cream Parlour

“We were a little nervous hosting a dark skies event as we had not done anything like this before, however the Yorkshire Dales National Park Tourism staff were excellent and held our hand along the way and provided the confidence we needed to create the event.

Having lived in the Dales most of my life, and absolutely taking the dark skies for granted, it was amazing to hear from our attendee’s comments such as:

“Wow, we have learned so much, you can see so clearly here, we can’t see anything at home.”

“We’ve come from Bradford as we can’t see the stars at home.”

“We’ve come from Leeds to learn about our skies.”

Our event was aimed at a beginner’s guide and those attending ranged from primary school age to older retired folk, just interested to learn about “above and beyond”.

The event was a sell-out, on both occasions we have hosted it, and despite the weather we have been able to see for ourselves what is out there and learn something new each time.

Our two events were both great successes which, out of season, was a nice way of attracting people to the area. Some of whom I recognise are now return visitors.”